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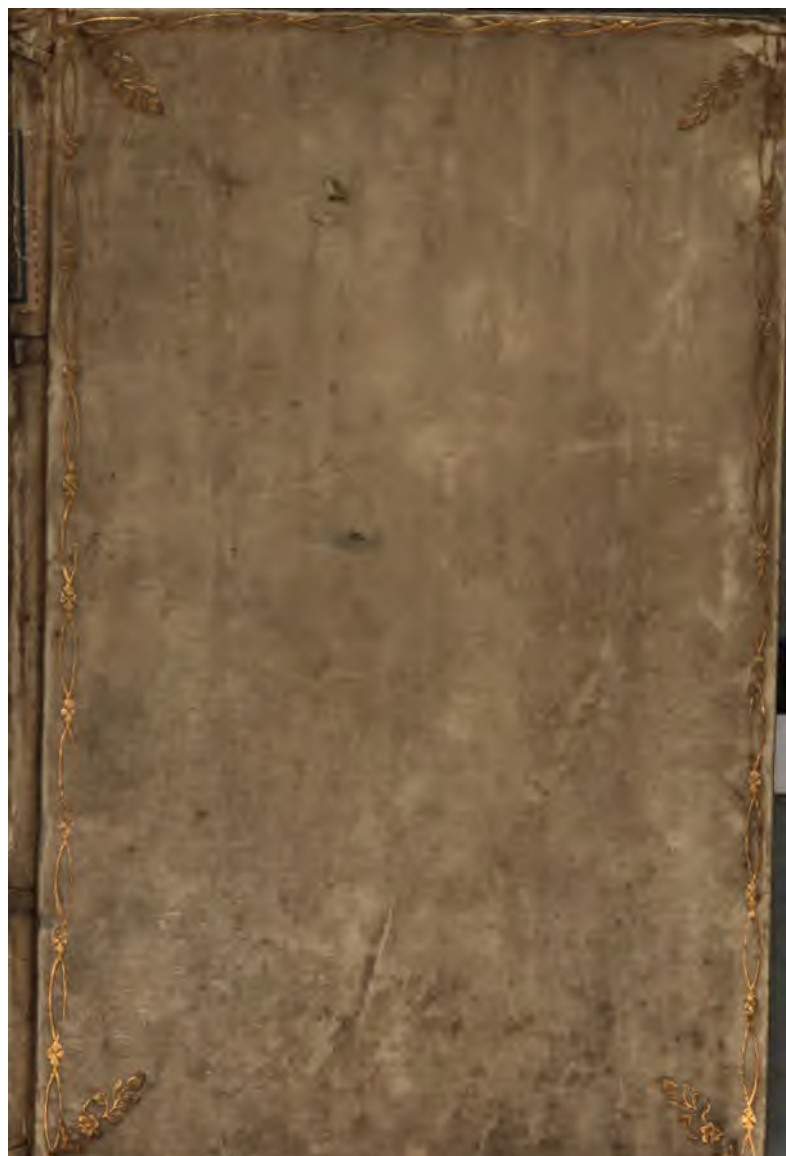
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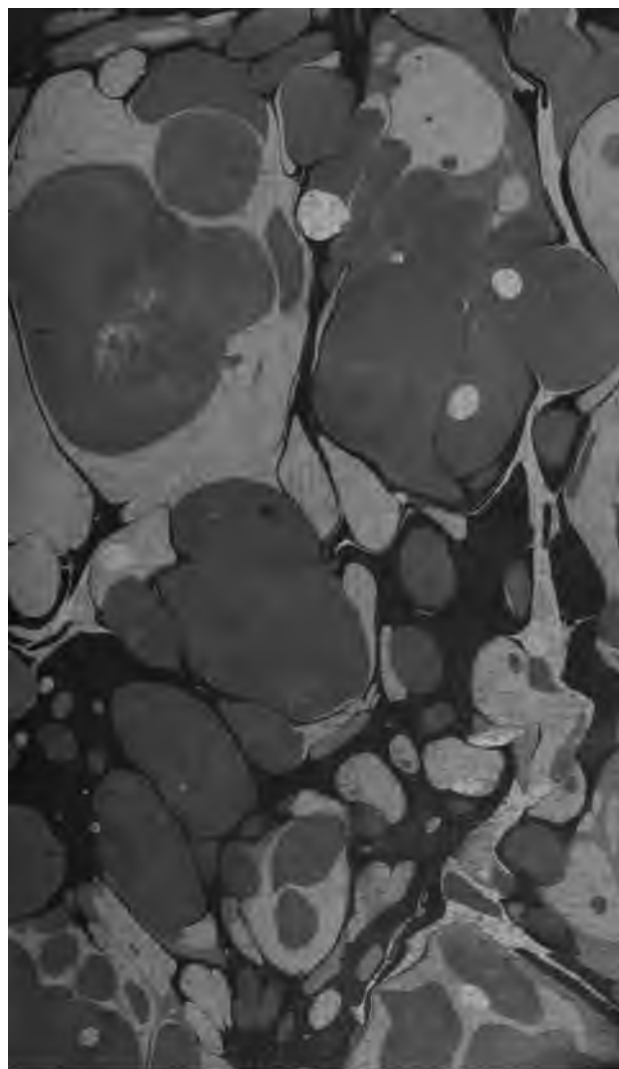
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Lewis. Montolieu?



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Macmillan
1883



AN
INQUIRY
INTO THE
MANNERS, TASTE,
AND
AMUSEMENTS,
OF THE
TWO LAST CENTURIES,
IN
ENGLAND.

*Multorum disce exemplo quæ facta sequaris,
Quæ fugias: vita est nobis aliena magistra.*

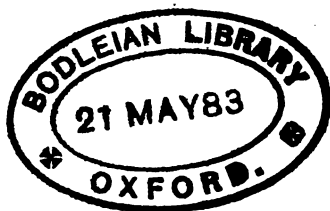
By JOHN ANDREWS, LL. D.

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To the READER.

THE intent of the following pages, is not to oppose the introduction of elegant relaxations in this country ; but meerly to censure that insatiable fondness for them, which induces such a number of individuals of all ranks, to frequent them much more than their circumstances will afford, and much oftener than can possibly tend to the benefit of their morals. Pleasures, and it may even be

TO THE READER.

be said, variety of pleasures are useful, if not necessary; but then they should not be crowded upon us : we should take them, as we do food ; of which the variety is only pernicious, when indulged without a proper interval of time.

The truth is, that our public amusements, if not too numerous, are, at least, too repeatedly frequented by the same people ; and are now become a kind of refuge from what the French call *ennui* ; which is no other than a tedious sensation of the weight of time, owing to idleness and want of occupation.

To the R.E.A-D-E-R.

occupation. They who seek it most, are those classes of society on whom necessity has imposed no task to perform, and who for that reason generally make pleasure their only business.

Persons of this disposition ought to be reminded, that such a system of living cannot fail to enervate their faculties, and blunt that edge and appetite of fancy, which is necessary for the relish of any enjoyments : that, in short, it is intirely destructive of all happiness, as well as of all virtue. Neither public nor private virtue
can

To the READER.

can subsist in the midst of continual dissipation; and happiness can only be attained by attending to the duties of our respective stations: even pleasure itself, that idol of the times, is never found, whenever it becomes the sole object of our pursuits.

A.N

AN
INQUIRY,
&c.

WHEN the character of a nation undergoes any change of disposition or manners, in its moral or political conduct, the causes of it may be traced without difficulty to their original source : in the same manner as when the character of individuals suffers any alteration, it is soon known among their acquaintance, to what it may be ascribed. According to this maxim, which holds good
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invariably in matters of the highest importance, as well as in lesser concerns, the present alarming progress of private vices and public corruption in this country, may be easily accounted for, by examining the notions and ways of living of the past and of the present generations.

About the commencement of this century, the respective pastimes of the great and of the secondary classes, though sufficiently diversified, were still circumscribed within certain limits of regularity, and carried with them an appearance of dignity among the former, and of decorum among the latter. They had not yet transgressed the bounds of decent festivity, and were kept in due order, by being restrained

restrained to the connections arising from the ties of family, or of friendship. Persons who met together on the score of pleasure, were not, so usually as they are now, absolute strangers to each other. That promiscuous mixture of all kind of company, which the present spirit of dissipation renders so common and so acceptable, was then a thing almost unknown.

But as, in process of time, an uninterrupted series of national peace and felicity, is apt to produce remissness and languor in those who should watch over the public, and as it seldom fails to breed a propensity to wantonness in individuals, that simplicity of taste, and moderation in our

recreations and pleasures, which had long characterised the English nation, began to give way to an immoderate desire of increasing and diversifying them. We adopted with an eagerness, the more dangerous as the consequences were not then foreseen, those improvements, as they were styled, imported, partly by some of our fashionable travellers, but chiefly by indigent and scheming foreigners : not reflecting that the mischiefs they have invariably occasioned, wherever a constant range of amusement and dissipation has obtained footing, would indubitably be felt as severely in this country, as they had been in all others.

During the prosperous reign of
George

George the First and that of his successor, tranquillity at home, together with the most amazing increase of national opulence, were the causes that insensibly relaxed the minds of men. Being suffered to take their course by those who ought to have checked the evils, which an abuse of them will necessarily effect, these evils soon gained ground. They, indeed, in whose power, and therefore whose duty it was to have resisted, first and principally encouraged and patronized them. They advanced by gradual steps, and in no long space of time overflowed the whole community.

The consequences resulting from this introduction of a taste for expensive refinements, together with an un-

bounded rage for pleasures, were soon too visibly apparent. A corruption of morals ensued, that communicated itself from the great, down to the lowest classes of the vulgar, with the most pernicious rapidity. It may be affirmed with the fullest confidence, that, in the space of little more than thirty years, the whole mass of the people of England was infected to such a degree, that they might be said to have changed, in some very material respects, the character and the temper of Englishmen. It was during this corrupt period, that a system of parliamentary venality, unknown in former ages, was established throughout the kingdom, by a set of men, whose names are too well known

to

to need mentioning, and will be transmitted to posterity with more execration than seems at present affixed to them, if ever the constitution should be replaced on its former basis.

When events of so unpopular a nature, so evidently fatal in their tendency, so entirely repugnant to the united cries of a whole people, are suffered to take place ; will any man deny them to be a sufficient proof of the baseness and degeneracy of that very people ?

Such were the consequences of that depravity of disposition, and that unconcern for the welfare of the commonweal, which in all ages and countries have constantly proved the sure concomitants of a luxurious research.

after the various modes of refining pleasures, and of an unlimited passion for their enjoyment.

An uncommon solicitude prevails for improving amusements, inventing them at home, or importing them, through a variety of channels, from those nations whom we deem the greatest connoisseurs in these matters. It is now received among us with as much applause and admiration, as if it were a virtue of the highest degree. Beside other illaudable effects, it has produced a taste for frivolous avocations, totally inconsistent with the solidity and manliness of disposition peculiar to the people of England. This turn of mind has even in some degree infected our personal deportment ;

ment; but, what is much more to be lamented, it has blunted the edge of our national feelings, and relaxed the severity of our morals in public concerns.

It ought therefore to create no wonder, if, after divesting ourselves of that decorum in externals, which is the safeguard as well as the outline of interior dignity, we should no longer act or appear in the same respectable light we were wont to do.

This is a fact, wherein all enlightened, unprejudiced observers unanimously concur. The judicious among foreigners, as well as among the natives of this country, universally agree, that we are become, within this century,

tury, a very different people from what we were a century ago.

Voltaire, in his Preface to the History of Charles the Twelfth, king of Sweden, says positively that the English of these days are no more the English of times past.

Roussseau is of the same opinion, and with a philosophic indignation declares them unworthy the liberty of which they make such a boast.

Nor are those celebrated writers singular in their sentiments. It is frequent here, as well as abroad, to hear sensible foreigners lament the strange use we make of our freedom, in prostituting it on every occasion that offers, and putting it up to sale,

sale, as if it were a property which a man had a right to part with.

That this was by no means the general character of our ancestors, before the æras above-mentioned, is undeniable.

Among a variety of testimonies besides the foregoing, let us consult the Letters of Muralt, written not long after the Revolution.

That illustrious traveller, though severe in the depiction of our private manners, yet, in regard to public affairs, represents our forefathers in colours that would not, most assuredly, be descriptive of their descendants, in many essential instances.

He describes them as a high-minded, inflexible race of men, not easily warped

warped from their opinions and determinations ; of a temper firmly adherent, in spite of allurements, to resolves and measures they deemed founded on sense and justice ; and ready to undergo all hardships and mortifications in their support.

It is obvious to any one who will be at the trouble of examination, that an additional perversion of morals, both civil and domestic, followed the establishment of this passionate, unbridled propensity to indulge in a continual series and variety of pleasures.

The fact is, that, soon after its introduction, an increase of viciousness was immediately perceptible, and became the subject of animadversion
and

and censure, equally from the pulpit and the press. This appears by the sermons and moral performances that made their appearance in those days.

What Sallust says of his countrymen, the Romans, is remarkably applicable to the English nation. *Remoto metu Punico, mores non paulatim ut antea, sed Torrentis modo precipitati.* When the Romans had no longer the Carthaginians to fear, their manners did not, as before, decline gradually, but rushed like a torrent into the greatest excess of corruption. It was precisely so in this country. After the power of Lewis the Fourteenth had been totally reduced by the arms and councils of that confederacy, of which England had been
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the soul and support, tranquillity and indolence took place of that activity and restlessness, which, during the reigns of William and Anne, had kept alive the spirit and vigour of the nation.

Voltaire's observation on the times in France, after the demise of Lewis the Fourteenth, is very apposite to those that followed in the neighbouring nations, in ours especially, after the peace of Utrecht; an event very little remote from the precedent :

La Nature sembla se reposer.

Nature seemed inclined to rest.

This remark of Voltaire, on the decrease of those exertions of superior genius, that had been so frequent in the reign of that monarch, may not impro-

improperly be applied to what was produced by the cessation of those dreadful hostilities on all sides, that had embroiled Europe for the space of half a century. It seemed as if the minds of men, after having been harassed with such a long course of fatigues, were determined, on emerging to a season of calmness, to plunge themselves into all the indulgences it could afford.

Had this auspicious season been accompanied with some measure of vigilance over the manners and morals of the people here, the happiness of England would have been complete ; but, unfortunately, the very reverse befel us. It is well known to those who are conversant in

in the records and transactions of those times, that there never was before a more fatal stagnation of that order and police which forms and preserves good habits and dispositions in the minds of a people, than that which was suffered to take place at the period above-mentioned.

Since that period the contagion has been stedfastly progressive, particularly within the last twenty years. We need not recur to the memory of others, for the scandalous variety of excesses which have long seemed to bid defiance to the public eye, and to make, as it were, a parade of guilt and infamy, through the supineness of many who should discountenance them, almost bordering upon acquiescence and approbation.

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It is not, however, meant hereby to insinuate, that in former days we were free from those vices for which at present we are so justly censured. It is only contended, that we practise them now in a much more notorious and extensive degree.

If we turn our attention back to the reign of the licentious Charles the Second, notwithstanding his personal profligacy, notwithstanding the profligacy of them whom he chose for the companions and partners of his debaucheries, we shall find that his example, happily, had not that influence which it so seldom fails to have in the persons of Kings. The number of courtiers who imitated him was not considerable, when we reflect

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on the temptations they lay under ; and the majority of his subjects blamed him openly for his conduct. But, what is still more agreeable to a mind duly seasoned with a veneration for probity, we shall find too, that, in the midst of so dissolute a Court, some of those whose birth, merit, and station, intitled them to a nearer approach of their sovereign, had honesty and courage enough to signify to him their disapprobation of his conduct. The Earls of Southampton and Clarendon were frequently inveighing, in his presence, against the vices and immoralities he so flagrantly practised and encouraged. The Duke of Ormond, with a zeal and spirit deserving of better success than he met

met with, would often demand audience of him, for the purpose of warning him of the scandal he occasioned by the irregularity of his life. Neither were these the only courtiers who acted this equally bold and virtuous part. Charles himself would sometimes jokingly say, that he had more preachers and admonishers than any Prince in Christendom.

Among other reasons, why the English were not so depraved in their morals in the days of Charles the Second, this leading cause may be assigned: they had been engaged near thirty years in a most violent struggle for the preservation of their liberties. This struggle could not have been maintained without an immense stock

of virtue in those who conducted and supported it. Even of those who embraced the other side of the question, very few were actuated by principles of interest. Conscience alone was the ruling motive that impelled so many thousands to sacrifice their fortunes and lives in the defence of the cause they had espoused. Though both parties failed in the end, and neither the Royalists nor the Republicans had been fortunate in their designs, yet their spirits remained unbroken. Cromwell had indeed subdued them, but all his abilities could never suppress their restless endeavours to supplant him ; and he had, to the hour of his death, as much to fear from the one side as from the other.

On

On the Restoration, the Royalists divided into two very distinct parties; the one for absolute, the other for a limited power in the Crown: while the Republicans, still retaining their hatred to royalty, added a strictness of morals in the transactions of private life, far beyond that of their antagonists. These were, nevertheless, careful to shew themselves not remiss in the discharge of civil or religious duties, in order to counterbalance the weight, which, by the severity of their lives and conversation, their enemies had obtained in the minds of the public.

In such a situation, notwithstanding the excessive gloominess and austeri-
 ty so industriously affected and

propagated by the Puritans, wore off by degrees, yet it left such profound traces in the dispositions of the generality of men, that, in spite of the jovialness of Charles and his courtiers, the nation could never be brought to relish his ways ; and though his affability rendered his person tolerably beloved and popular, yet the maxims of his Government were never acceptable, and his morals always odious to the public at large.

In the mean while, the diversions and amusements he had imported, did not much diffuse themselves, and were chiefly confined to his palace : the stage only, which had been shut ever since the commencement of the civil wars, revived at his return. The
bulk

Bulk of the people expressed very little fondness for any of the new-invented kinds of recreation.

The result was, that the temper of the English nation was in a great measure untainted. The nobility, gentry, and commonalty, still retained in general their ancient ideas, and both private and public virtue shone forth upon many emergencies: witness the obstinate adherence of the Parliament to their pursuits against the Duke of York, afterwards James the Second: witness the inflexible patriotism of the many members who were so often closeted, and whose integrity could not be violated by all the allurements of court promises and preferments : not to pass by the ig-

nominous treatment which the court minions met with from the public on sundry occasions ; a circumstance which, though insignificant in itself, fully demonstrated how strongly the contempt and execration for vice and prostitution, however favoured and exalted, operated in the breasts even of the commonest sort at that time.

The reign of Charles the Second has been particularly insisted on, because many persons would insinuate, that it was a period marked by an universal dissoluteness of manners. True it is, that many of those who stood up for the maxims entertained at court, being meer soldiers of fortune, did not give themselves much solicitude about the regularity of their
lives

lives and manners; and, provided they had full licence to pass their days in mirth and revelry, or rather, to speak more properly, in debauchery and viciousness, they cared very little what kind of government subsisted. Individuals of this disposition and character were not wanting. Of such, at all times and in all countries, the major part of those who profess an unlimited obedience and devotion to courts. But the main body of the people was by no means either tainted with so deplorable an infatuation, or plunged in those vices that flourished under the connivance and countenance of the court.

Thus it may be affirmed, that, however vicious our ancestors were
a cen-

a century ago, they are exceeded by their descendants; and that, when we designate the reign of Charles the Second as an era of profligacy, we forget that it did no more than lay the foundations of our present excesses. Lord Bolingbroke, an expert judge in matters, (*quæque miserrime vidit, et quorum pars magna fuit,*) of which he saw the miserable effects and consequences, and wherein he was no inconsiderable actor in his early days, acknowledges that our luxury *was then but young*, far from being arrived to the pitch he saw it carried to, long before the latter part of his life. No man becomes at once a consummate villain, is an axiom not more true respecting individuals,

duals, than collective bodies of men. The nation at that period was far from being ripe for a destruction of their morals. There was too much of solid, sterling virtue and piety in every party and persuasion, to be overturned with facility. In spite of the endeavours of Charles and his adherents, enough of both remained to resist the designs of an iniquitous court, during his reign, and to inspire the nation with spirit and vigour sufficient to bring about the Revolution, that happily defeated the no less pernicious projects of his successor.

Having, it is presumed, proved that the English were a more upright, virtuous people, at that time, than at present, it may possibly be asked, why the
poets

poets and other ingenious writers of those days are so unchaste and loose in their productions, and so ready upon occasion to draw such immodest pictures, unless they knew they were calculated for the meridian of their age, and were well apprized they would meet with a favourable reception. This is easily answered. The poets and writers, who were then most encouraged, were such only as coincided with the views and manners of the court; Dryden, Otway, Rochester, Etheredge, Wycherly, &c. Dryden's and Otway's dedications breathe the most abject spirit of slavery; and the whole world knows Rochester to have been the downright champion of obscenity. These, and other

other writers of the like cast, may be said to have rather drawn such pictures as they imagined would please their patrons, than to have painted the really existent manners of their cotemporaries.

The only performance of indisputable merit, that met with much applause at court, was Hudibras. But even the success of that was intirely owing to the ridicule it threw on the opposite party. The obscurity that surrounded the immortal Milton, shews how little attention was paid to real worth. None of those, indeed, who aimed at something more than reputation in the republic of letters, confined their parts merely to the display of their genius and capacity :
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another part was necessary to be acted: they knew it well; and studied their own interest too much, to deviate from the sentiments that were triumphant among those who were at the head of affairs.

It was indeed through the repeated efforts of venal and immoral writers, together with the concurring assistance of the libertinism of several among the great, that, towards the latter end of Charles's reign, an alarming change was wrought in the manners of the English nation. They were fallen from the former strictness of their morals, and from the simplicity of their ways of living. On the whole; the national character was impaired. But this degeneracy had
not

not spread itself so far, as to affect those principles on which the edifice of religion and morality is founded. These still remained unshaken. Though men might run great lengths in their deviations from the precepts of either, their consciences were not seared against admonition, and they had not yet broken down those fences, which are now experimentally found of so little efficacy, to stem the torrent of passion, interest, and ambition.

After this recapitulation of the facts, on which we are to form a comparison between the present times and the past, one may venture to affirm they establish the opinion, that we are inferior to our forefathers,

fathers, not only in those qualities that enable mankind to appear with dignity on the great stage of the world, but in those that render private life respectable. Without these latter, it is utterly impossible the former should attain that summit of perfection which renders them truly meritorious. For though it has been advanced, that private vices may become, in their consequences, public benefits, it would be the height of absurdity to imagine, that the practice of vice and iniquity at home, will not prove an impediment to the exercise of virtue abroad.

It were needless perhaps to carry our retrospect to remoter periods than

than those we have examined : but in order to silence, if possible, the cavils of those who would inculcate the notion, that we are not sunk into the worst state of depravity that ever befel us, it may not be amiss to inquire, what kind of spirit and manners prevailed in the nation, during the times antecedent to those we have been describing.

None can deny the reign of the unfortunate Charles the First, to have been totally free from every species of licentiousness in morals, so far as the infirmity of human nature will admit. There was in his days too much of business in every civil, political, and religious department, to permit much thought and study in

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the improvement of meer pleasure. Some attempts were made, it is true, at novelty in amusements ; but they were of a kind that reflected honour on their authors, and shewed their ingenuity much more than their attachment to frivolous pastimes. Such, for example, was the celebrated pageant, among the contrivers and conductors of which, we find some of the most illustrious names of the age ; even that of a Selden : such was the Masque of Comus, composed by Milton, to omit other instances ; all of which, instead of arguing any proneness to levity in the times, proved, on the contrary, an exquisite taste for decorum and propriety in their methods of relaxation, and that
their

their patronisers were men who fully understood how to enjoy and reconcile *otium cum dignitate*—leisure and recreation with temperance and dignity.

The Comedies of Ben Johnson, written at that æra, betray nothing of looseness and immorality : there are none in our language to which the saying is more applicable, *castigat ridendo* ; that their author was perfectly skilled in the art of exposing and reprehending vices and follies, with good humour and pleasantry.

Charles himself, to do him justice, was not only a pattern of decency in behaviour, but a profest discourager of whatever had a tendency to levity : it may even be said, that he carried

his notions of seriousness and gravity too far, on some occasions. However, it cannot be objected to him, that he was a foe to decent, becoming mirth; on the contrary, his court abounded with those diversions that were compatible with the majesty of his station; and though an enemy to all excesses, he rather delighted in innocent amusements.

Mean time the Puritanic party, which daily grew more numerous and formidable, was composed of men, whose principles led them to testify the most scrupulous abhorrence for all pleasures that bore the least colour of danger to the morals of mankind. Hence they detested all expensive gaieties in their pastimes, and confined

fined themselves to the most plain and simple relaxations, such as were no more than absolutely necessary for the refreshment of the body and mind and could leave no occasion for repentance.

Though they were not yet the prevailing party, still their influence was very strong throughout the nation. The continual persecutions they underwent, instead of impressing the public with the notion that they suffered according to their deserts, produced quite a contrary effect, and led people to examine what they had done to draw down upon them so much severity. This inquiry was far from proving unfavourable to them: it awakened in most men a

compassion for their sufferings, and a desire to see them mitigated. From sentiments of this kind, the transition was easy to sentiments of indignation, against those who punished so unmercifully a deviation from modes of worship, far from essential in their nature. All these considerations, joined to the purity of their manners, insensibly won them a prodigious share of public esteem ; and, from being respected, they of course became models of imitation.

Thus it appears, that all things conspired in those days to cherish a reserve and solemnity in the deportment of men. The courtiers were grave, after the example of their sovereign ; the people, through the influence

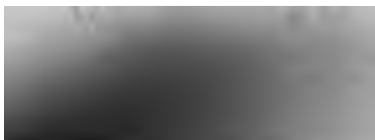
fluence of the Puritans. This serious humour prevailed in all classes and professions; it shone principally in the writings of the most eminent scholars of that age, and was of admirable service in conferring strength and manliness on their style, as Mr. Gordon judiciously observes in the Discourses with which he prefaces his translation of Tacitus.

Neither should we pass by, on this occasion, the merit of the King himself, who both wrote and spoke with an elegance and dignity intirely worthy of his character; worthy, indeed, of a better cause than that he had unfortunately met at heart.

We may further add, that his learning was of a much superior kind

to that of his son, Charles the Second ; who, however keen a connoisseur of men and things, was more conversant in books of wit and amusement, than in works of utility and instruction ; and, tho' no incompetent judge of literary merit, was rather a facetious and agreeable companion, than a man of deep knowledge or extensive disquisition.

The austerity of manners that prevailed on the dissolution of the monarchy, in all who possessed or aspired at the possession of power, is too well known to need insisting upon. What Voltaire so pertinently calls, *la sombre administration de Cromwell*——the gloomy administration of Cromwell, left no room for any qualities to recommend themselves, but such as were conducive



conducive either to the support of his authority, or to the welfare and grandeur of the nation. To such qualities, prejudice itself must acknowledge he extended the most ready protection, and even exerted his utmost industry to discover and render them serviceable ; as the many great and glorious events, reflecting equal lustre on his government and on the English nation, will ever invincibly testify.

Nor can it be denied, that this celebrated man, in the midst of those triumphs that spread the terror of his name over all Europe, was at the same time solicitous to form the manners of his countrymen, on a plan consistent with the spirit and vigour which was then the character of English-

Englishmen. His private manner of living was such as all sovereigns might imitate : regularity, one may well imagine, was the basis of a Puritanic court ; but it was not tinged with any pedantry of state : Oliver had too much of the soldier, to attach himself to needless formalities. The tenor of his life was plain and simple : excepting those occasions wherein a display of the greatness of the people whom he represented, was proper and necessary, he studiously avoided all pomp and ostentation. He banished all sort of effeminacy in apparel, pastimes, and deportment, from those over whom he had any immediate controul ; whoever approached him was obliged to conform to this regulation.

lation. It may be said there was not a sovereign in his time able to boast such a manly assemblage of courtiers ; most of them persons of prime eminence in their various stations, and every way fit to be trusted with the execution of the noblest designs.

In the mean time, the martial spirit that had been kindled by the civil wars, subsisted in its full force, and was visible in all transactions. Firmness and magnanimity were the virtues of the times, and kept at a distance whatever had the least semblance of weakness and pusillanimity. All things partook of this vigorous disposition ; it insinuated itself into all companies, conversations, and amusements ; it presided over all denominations,

nations, alike over manhood and over youth, to infuse into whom that resolute frame of mind, on which men then prided themselves, Milton composed his well-known Treatise on Education.

With this elevation of soul, derived from an unfeigned contempt for all that was trifling and unmanly, it was no ways surprising, that the English became, as Mr. Guthrie, in his History of England, styles them at that time, the heroes of the world. No European nation made then so brilliant a figure. From the shores of Holland to the extremities of the Mediterranean Sea, and of the Atlantic Ocean, their fleets struck universal fear, and ruled with irresistible sway ;
their

their ambassadors commanded the most profound respect and deference in all the courts of Christendom; while individuals, whom their various occasions called abroad, were treated every where with the utmost civility and attention.

After this review of the temper and manners of the times in England, from the reign of Charles the First, let us step back to that of his father. No Prince in our history has met with less quarter from all historians, than James the First. Certain it is, he laid himself open to malice and detraction, as if he had resolved to give himself no solicitude concerning what the world might say about him. He was remarkably deficient in that
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been bred under, the continua
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bulence of the ruling men in Sc
land, before his accession to t
Crown of England, and the habit c
applying himself to pedantic studies,
for

on a sudden invironed with all sort of abundance and splendor.

But, notwithstanding the use he made of his new-acquired fortune, was more like that of a needy youth just arrived at the possession of a large estate, than of a Prince succeeding to a long-expected crown, yet the contempt he soon fell under prevented the contagion from spreading. The frequent comparisons made by his subjects between him and his predecessor, the meannesses both in his public and private capacity that gave perpetual occasion and scope for those comparisons, sunk him so low in their estimation, that whatever he said, wrote, or did, was equally despicable in their eyes.

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The consequence was, that James was left to enjoy himself and his amusements, amidst a circle of interested courtiers, who buoyed him up with all that incense of flattery with which feeble minds are so charmed; while the whole nation rung with discontent and complaints of his conduct and maxims; and while, what was still more dishonourable, he was held in derision, and his administration reviled in every Court abroad.

In the mean time, the nation still preserved the illustrious character it had so long sustained. The world was too clear-sighted to involve the monarch and his subjects in the same condemnation. The inclinations and
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pursuits of the public were the same as heretofore. Their minds, occupations, and pleasures, grave, spirited and manly. So far, indeed, were they from receiving any influence from the character of their monarch that his own son Henry, as promised a young Prince as ever raised the expectations of a kingdom, could never be brought to express the least reluctance or approbation of his father's conduct. Such of the nobility and gentry as had no immediate connexion with the King's particular court, were of the same opinion as this gallant youth; and addicted themselves to those occupations and pastimes he delighted in: these were all of an active kind, and much in the stile of the

he was employed in, when, on a French ambassador's coming to take his audience of leave of him, he bad him tell his master, Henry the Fourth, that he had left the Prince of Great Britain learning to toss the lance.

If under so feeble a head as James the First, the English nation still retained its native manliness of disposition, well might it flourish with distinguished lustre, under so bright a pattern as Queen Elizabeth ; a woman on whom the European nations conferred, with infinite justice, the title of King.

Succeeding to a precarious throne, she found herself surrounded by as many enemies as she had neighbours.

These enemies consisted of the greatest politicians, and powerfulest Princes in Europe. She found her own realm exhausted, while her enemies attacked her on the one hand with numerous armies, and on the other, with a profusion of treasure, exerted their utmost endeavours to bribe and alienate those in whom she placed her confidence, and relied for support. The zeal and fidelity of her subjects, charmed with her virtues and sublime qualities, enabled her to rise superior to all her foes ; and not only to defeat the schemes they had formed against her person and kingdom, but to carry her victorious arms into their own territories : thus teaching mankind, that Princes who reign in the hearts
and

and affections of their people at home, need not be apprehensive of danger from abroad.

But let us confine ourselves to the personal system of living adopted by Queen Elizabeth, and the influence it had over the English.

On her accession, all things both in church and state were in the utmost disorder. Nothing but reformation in her own domestic methods of proceeding, could further effectually the work she took in hand, of new-moulding the religion and the policy of the realm. She saw herself, therefore, obliged to lead the way in person. With a magnanimity truly becoming so glorious and difficult an enterprize, she determined to acquire

by her own example, the right of enforcing the practice of those salutary regulations, which her capacious mind had framed for the safety, welfare, and reputation of her kingdom.

In order to create and encourage a spirit of temperance and moderation in the ways of living, she wisely suppressed that needless luxurious plenty at court, in a great measure owing to the pernicious generosity, and ostentatious magnificence of her father, Henry the Eighth. She introduced a less expensive manner of supporting the majesty of the crown, equally removed from sordidness and profusion ; and, by uniting œconomy with abundance, she laid the truest foundation for solid and permanent splendor,

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These retrenchments were made so judiciously, that none appeared to have fallen but on things absolutely useless and unprofitable in every light. Her court still remained magnificent and splendid, and surpassed in these respects all the courts of Christendom.

In conformity to the pattern she had set her subjects, they learned to ally domestic plenty with prudence and discretion, in their expences ; and to seek rather to enjoy the sweets and comforts of life, than to make an idle and superfluous parade of them.

Mean while, that all classes and conditions of men might act according to this beneficial spirit, rules and ordinances were enacted, in order to

restrain all immoderate proceeding, on those occasions where people are apt to go beyond due limits. Even her own courtiers were not exempt from her severest reprimands, when they exceeded what she thought the bounds of propriety.

In the midst of this vigilance to curb extravagance of every denomination, no sovereign was more attentive to impress foreigners with the highest sense of respect for herself, and for the realm she governed. On those emergencies that necessarily call for a display of grandeur, she spared nothing to render her person and her court superb and brilliant. If, indeed, she can be reproached with any excesses, it may be for having

ing carried her fondness for dress and decoration too far, and for having entertained too partial an opinion of her personal graces.

Let us, however, draw the veil of oblivion over these unimportant foibles, and examine her conduct in scenes of a more exalted, and more interesting nature.

Had she done no more than introduce habits of carefulness and oeconomy among her subjects, that alone would have been rendering them an essential service, at a time when they were particularly wanted in a country that was beginning to launch into many channels of trade, and endeavouring to make a capital figure in a province, for which its position was so happily calculated.

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But her mind was too penetrating, her spirit indued with too much activity, to stop here. She saw her enemies on the continent daily gathering strength ; she was aware this strength would be exerted against her ; she knew that her principal reliance would be on her people at home ; and that, considering the circumstances of affairs in Europe, instead of receiving assistance from others, her own assistance would, in all probability, be highly needed by her well-wishers abroad.

These were sufficient motives to prepare for the day of trial, and to summon all those helps that were requisite to face those dangers she so justly expected to encounter.

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This she did in a manner befitting the Queen of a great and resolute nation. In order to inure equally the minds and bodies of men to fortitude and vigour, she was careful in her discourses to pay the highest homage to valour, and to give the greatest encouragement to persons of known bravery. To disseminate a martial temper, and a useful emulation throughout the youthful classes, unremitting care was taken to train up in military exercises all whose stations and duty required them to be conversant in the use of arms; and those diversions were industriously promoted and circulated that bore the resemblance of war.

The consequences of this sagacious
conduct

conduct were apparent in a short time. The nobility, the gentry, the commonalty, animated with her own spirit, vied with each other in feats of manly prowess ; and both town and country were filled with men skilled in military matters.

Let it not be said, that such a turn of mind is apt to make men cruel and ferocious, and to take them off from more profitable employments ; that it is only in a military state, like that of Rome or Sparta, that such a system is admissible ; and that it tends to destroy the sedateness of temper necessary for carrying on of trade and manufactures.

Experience has shewn these surmises

to be ill-founded. Without recurring to any other proof, the experience of those very times has shewn the reverse to be true. Far from being rude and ferocious, Queen Elizabeth's courtiers were the most shining ornaments of the realm: an Essex, a Sydney, a Raleigh, not to mention many more, were names in whom politeness, learning, and heroism, were blended with equal lustre. The nobility and gentry throughout the realm were formed on the same model. The people, at the same time, in the midst of this addiction to warlike exercises, were so far from being unprofitably employed, that it is precisely from this period we are to date the principal commencement of

of most improvements in every branch of trade and every useful art.

The truth was, that Elizabeth knew how to reconcile these various pursuits, and to render them subservient to the grandeur and felicity of her people. This was the great and sole art of government by which she became so universally respected. This is the only art by which the judicious part of mankind pronounce on the worth or demerit of their rulers ; and this, in short, is that royal necessary art, which whoever possesses not, is unfit to wear a crown.

While the prosperity of the nation was thus wisely consulted, and solidly established at home, its glory and reputation were no less conspicuous

suous abroad. Formed and prepared by manly habits and occupations in their own country, the English, when called into foreign parts, appeared to an advantage that signally distinguished them, in the many memorable scenes that marked those troublesome times. The famous Prince of Orange, Mauritius, acknowledged them to be the flower of his army ; the no less celebrated Prince of Parma, Alexander Farnese, looked on them as his most dangerous enemies ; and the great Henry the Fourth of France stiled them the companions of his victories.

No men could better deserve these illustrious testimonies : it was not only in the proofs they gave of intrepidity

trepidity that they rendered themselves remarkable ; their discipline was no less admired ; and chiefly the speedy facility with which the new levies that came from England, attained the knowledge and skill of veterans. This was entirely owing to the practice of those military feats at home that have been mentioned, and which were in a manner become their most usual and most favourite pastimes.

To such a degree of expertness were the generality of people arrived, and the fact was so well known, that the ministry of England, fully acquainted with the strength and power of the nation, neither betrayed nor felt any timorousness on the approach
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of the Spanish armada. The people themselves were so well apprized of their own capacity to face the foe, that, far from being in the least intimidated on this critical occasion, they shewed no other concern, than what the bravest men will naturally feel, when they are preparing for battle, and reflect on the chances of war : inasmuch, that what Montesquieu says of the Romans, while the Commonwealth subsisted, might, without much straining the point, have been applied to the English under Queen Elizabeth ; that they were of so war-like a disposition, that the forces raised among them, formed themselves instantly to discipline, and were not afraid to encounter any enemy.

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On comparing this undauntedness of our ancestors, with the apprehensions that were so visible in the countenances and discourses of all individuals promiscuously, when this country was menaced with a French invasion, at the commencement of last war, it cannot fail to excite our utmost indignation, that since the Restoration, a period of a whole century, no adequate means had been adopted to prevent so shameful a despondency from having just grounds on such a contingency. The settlement of the militia, that had so long taken place, was productive of nothing but disorder and confusion. The fruitless military parades of undisciplined multitudes, that recurred some times in
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the different counties, served only to remind thinking people of what really ought to have been done. Whoever looks on them as more than meer farces, as they were then conducted, *animum pictura pascit inani*, feeds his mind with an empty picture, and takes the shadow for the substance.

Yet what an opposition arose to the establishment of a better plan ; what difficulties were encountered in the formation of the present system of national defence, by a regular body of well-trained militia !

It was reserved to the superior wisdom and firmness of the administration of the late Earl of Chatham, to bring about this necessary reformation : had he done no more, it would

have been sufficient to endear his memory to future generations.

But to return to the days of Elizabeth. What highly merits our attention, and will undoubtedly afford particular satisfaction to those who delight in that exterior glare, which is so conspicuously the taste of the present times, the manliness of character peculiar to the English of that æra, was so far from interfering with the less rugged pursuits of genteel life, that it may truly be said, that, at no time since, the real art and enjoyment of it was better understood and practised.

With regard to those departments of elegance, which render domestic life agreeable and splendid, the English

lish. were in that age the patterns of Europe, scarce any nation excepted : the only people that could enter into competition with them, were the Italians ; among whom long before the arts of civilization and polite living had been chiefly cultivated. - But at this period, England vied with Italy itself in these respects. This assertion may appear bold and hazardous ; but is nevertheless strictly true, and confirmed even by the testimony of an Italian cotemporary writer ;, one who was no less a person than an Ambassador from the Republic of Venice to the Court of England ; a man who, from the purport of his errand hither, must, it should seem, have had access to the

best, and most authentic information that could be procured, that of ocular knowledge. *Nulla toto orbe gens est* (says he) *quæ Anglos exsuperet splendore domestico*,—there is no nation on earth that exceeds the English in domestic splendor.

This domestic splendor was not confined to a few grandees : it was happily very much diffused. Foreigners, who visited England at that period, expatiate upon it in a manner that shews how pleasingly they were struck with it, and at the same time how different the scene was from what they had been used to behold elsewhere.

But what powerfully added to this splendor, and enhanced the merit of persons

persons of high rank and fortune, was the taste that accompanied it, and the laudable turn of mind of the people of fashion in those days, to use their affluence in such a manner, as might redound to public utility. It was common, among such as could afford it, to hold, at stated times, a kind of open court, for all comers to display their talents and abilities in arms and horsemanship. We read even of an Archbishop of Canterbury, who kept a great number of horses, trained for the purposes of war, and entertained many young gentlemen in his household, who were carefully instructed, not only in the academical, but also in the military sciences. This illustrious Prelate was a particular favourite

of Queen Elizabeth ; and thought, no doubt, he could not pay his court more effectually to so excellent a mistress, than by imitating her in what he knew was uppermost in her mind, the promoting of whatever could prove conducive to the glory and service of the kingdom.

Another object equally deserving our attention, was the flourishing condition of literature and the polite arts : they were held in the highest estimation, and cultivated by all ranks, without exception, as far as their occupations would permit. This circumstance claims a more special consideration ; because there are some who think, that strictness of virtue and morality are often liable to suffer

suffer from a communication with the Muses : but they who reason in this manner, forget that it is not they who corrupt us, but we who corrupt them ; and that, upon a due examination, the greatest and best of men have been indebted, for the heroism of those motives that rendered their actions great and laudable, to the happy attachment they have profest for literary pursuits.

But that particular which ought to be weighed above all others, is that the gayest and most delightful of all genteel pastimes, may be said to have commenced in this æra of manliness and gravity : this was the stage ; which rose under Shakespeare's hands to a height of dignity, which
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it has never surpassed. Of all entertainments, none were received with more approbation and applause, none followed with more appetite and ardour. But the real reason was not merely because they were dramatic, but because they were calculated to please the taste of a judicious, reflecting people, and were fraught with an active kind of instruction.

Thus it must appear, that the age of Queen Elizabeth was not only virtuous and manly, but at the same time no less polished, splendid, and even gay. The combination of all these has been pointed out, to obviate the absurd notions of some, who seem to imagine, that the virtue of our forefathers was rather an asperity of manners,

manners, owing in a great measure to the want of polite improvements in their ways of living.

This erroneous opinion has taken its rise in the minds of those who are not able to account for the degeneracy of our manners, otherwise than by imputing it to those refinements, that are daily taking place in every branch, where elegance is chiefly to dictate and preside. They possibly conclude, that the mind, by being long confined to objects unnecessary in their nature, and of no serious tendency, contracts a sort of levity, that lays it more open to the attacks of effeminacy.

When the mind is taken up with objects merely pleasurable, and employs
habitually

Habitually an immoderate length of time in that manner, then indeed it cannot fail to become enervated and debased. This is precisely the case of the present age. An incessant round of meer amusements, seems the capital bent and pursuit of the generality of those who figure in what is stiled high life. But when attention does not turn amusements into business, when it is chiefly occupied in what can really claim the title of improvements, whether they are intellectual or manual, whether they are absolutely necessary, or only useful and convenient, or even simply ornamental, while they contribute to the mutual support and cement of society, and to increase the innocent comforts of life, it is surely unreasonable.

able to accuse them of effeminating and corrupting the manners of mankind.

We are not, therefore, to seek in the refinement of arts, for the source of our present corruption in morals ; we are to seek for it in those endless refinements in the modes of pleasure, that ingross the attention of the times in a scandalous degree. Both high and low are equally captivated by them : the only difference is, that the high are entirely absorbed in their enjoyment, while the low can only regret their inability to launch into equal excesses, and vent their envy of those whom fortune has qualified to live in this riotous manner.

Were the loss of time they occasion, or even the expences they draw after

the fact, that such consequences, even if they should be avoided, would be sufficient to justify the law. But when we reflect, that the multiplicity of the dangerous influences among us is of the most general tendency; that it encourages idleness and extravagance, in their fullest extremes, and of course opens a door to the practice of the most daring licentiousness; it is high time they should meet with the reprobation of those, whose duty it is to controul and give a check to whatever can be proved of mischievous consequence to the nation, either in a public or private light.

The toleration of these continual scenes of riot and dissipation, can readily be demonstrated no less injurious

jurious to the political welfare, than to the morals of our people. This will evidently appear, if we cast an eye on the effects they have produced in those countries, where they have been admitted and countenanced.

Without entering into a diffuse detail, let us examine what has happened in those nations that excite our more immediate notice, and are principally visited and frequented by our countrymen, Italy and France.

In Italy, where a boundless appetite for luxurious diversions first originated, the date of its birth was followed by a general corruption of manners. This corruption began by poisoning the source of domestic felicity, and destroying those motives that
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render home a scene of the most permanent pleasures. The reciprocal ties of lawful love were loosened, and gave way to the infamies of lust and prostitution. The names of husband and wife became gradually words of form, and the most criminal connexions grew at length not only common, but in a manner authorised, through the force of example, and the prevalence of a species of iniquity, that is a peculiar scandal to that country.

Such were the consequences in private life, of this insatiable thirst of refinements in pleasure; while in public affairs, by relaxing the manliness of temper and disposition, necessary for the conceiving and carrying
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on of great designs, the grandeur of the state mouldered away, through the dissipatedness and effeminacy of individuals. Hence, during the space of two centuries, that once flourishing country has been visibly on the decline : their formerly celebrated Republics have now lost their importance ; the better half of the country is subjected to foreigners ; and the greater part of the inhabitants are sunk into the most contemptible indolence.

The French, though undoubtedly a great and respectable nation, are immoderately addicted to loose and luxurious pastimes. This is meant of the upper classes. They retain of course but little of that vir-

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tue, which is the chief ingredient in the happiness of life.

This virtue is conjugal fidelity, which always flourishes or decays, in proportion as these dangerous amusements meet with countenance or discouragement.

That a spirit of libertinism is derived from an unrestrained frequentation of them, is sufficiently obvious, by the effects it produces. It is the universal complaint of the sensible and virtuous part of society, in France as well as in England, and every other country.

Though the consequences flowing from such a disposition, have been made light of, and treated rather ludicrously than seriously, by superficial

cial people ; yet to those who view them attentively and judiciously, they will manifestly appear to deserve being numbered among the greatest evils ; as they exert as fatal an influence over the public welfare, as over private happiness. This is a position that will be completely elucidated, by considering the actual state of matrimony in France ; and by examining, at the same time, how far the spirit and practice of what is called gallantry, is compatible with the spirit and existence of a free constitution.

Among the great in France, it is hardly possible to distinguish whose nuptial partner a man or a woman is, by any other mark than that of appel-

lation. Among the less important classes, the same humour prevails, as far as their circumstances will admit of an imitation of the great.

The French Ladies are strangers to restraints, and enjoy unbounded freedom. Their husbands never think of thwarting their inclinations, and allow them full permission to shape their course as they judge proper, in what relates to their personal conduct.

In consequence of this unrestraint, the women addict themselves to the pursuit of their pleasures, without interruption or fear; and seem to feel but little solicitude about the world's opinion of their proceedings. Husbands are too civil to make much, if any inquiry at all, concerning them; and,

and, indeed, as they deny no kind of licence to their wives, they debar themselves from none, in their turn.

Hence it is, that France is a country where gallantry is in high vogue, and bears a less odious aspect than it does in most other parts ; tho' surely nothing can be more scandalous, in the eye of decency, than a system of infamy methodized, as it were, and openly carried on, and allowed of by a tacit kind of agreement.

From those ignominious causes, proceed those voluntary separations on each side, of family, society, and almost acquaintance, under the same roof ; each possessing the absolute and sole property of different apartments, different servants, different equipages,

in short, different every thing. Hence also, what is much worse, that frequent indifference of the men, for what they have often little reason to esteem their genuine progeny.

It is no small happiness, that, amidst the absurd, servile, and detrimental imitation of foreign modes and manners, that execrable one, of infidelity in the marriage state, has not yet been imported into England in any very extensive degree ; and that, luckily for the public, the guilty, however exalted, are singled out as objects of shame and contempt.

Whether the good sense for which this nation is remarkable, or whether the nature of our government has hitherto proved most effectual in preventing

venting it, is hard to tell. They both undoubtedly have opposed it ; but probably more the latter cause ; as it is observable, that this avowed reciprocal indifference in the married parties, is a vice that has seldom been known to flourish in a republican state.

Among the Greeks and Romans, Love long accompanied, as well as preceded, marriage. This is meant of the virtuous and flourishing times of those celebrated nations. Among the Romans especially, matrimonial affection subsisted so long, and in such repute, that we find but one single instance of a divorce among them, for the space of five hundred years ; an incident the more remarkable, as the Roman husbands had the

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privilege of recurring to that expedient, whenever they suspected ill usage from their wives.

Let no man cite the examples of Venice and Genoa, where the practice prevails of husbands consenting, as it were through customary prescription, to a prostitution of their wives. Neither Venice nor Genoa are strictly republics, though they assume the name: they are absolute aristocracies, where a set of hereditary masters lord it over the multitude, and by a series of oppressive politics have ingrossed the powers of administration, to the exclusion of all other individuals, however conspicuous their worth, or however serviceable their abilities might prove to the public.

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Let us turn to governments that merit the denomination of commonwealths, those of Holland and Swisserland for instance ; countries which, though far from being the favourites of nature, are, through the industry and virtues of the inhabitants, the seats of as much true happiness as any nations ever enjoyed in the most delightful situations that climate or soil can afford. Here we shall find the ties of mutual affection triumphant, and infidelity between the sexes held in its proper and merited abhorrence : here, in consequence of this salutary detestation, the genius of domestic felicity presides in all its glory, and, if such a phrase may be allowed, holds up a mirror

mirror of conviction to mankind, that shews how much more it contributes to real comforts and pleasures, than those empty devices to render life a meer parade, which are the boast of some nations less fortunate, though more magnificent.

The reason why virtuous love has a more diffusive existence in states that are free, than in such as are subject to arbitrary power, is, that more virtue is requisite in the establishment, cementing, and preservation of the former; whereas in the latter, force alone is the fundamental and ruling principle.

Hence as good qualities generally go together, and are naturally productive of each other, a free government

vernment will be more fertile in worthy characters, than a despotic one. In this, obedience to the sovereign being considered as the supreme standard of personal desert, and every other instance of merit holding but a secondary rank, it will too readily follow, that from being implicitly obeyed, he will be implicitly imitated.

Thus, when a monarch, or, which is the same, when the rulers in such a constitution addict themselves to a course of licentious living, as it usually happens where men have no bar either of shame or apprehension in their way, their vicious examples excite a much more general imitation throughout the slavish multitude, than

than the ill precedents of individuals can occasion in a commonwealth. Here happily none are of importance enough to influence the manners of a whole people, while these retain a necessary spirit of watchfulness and jealousy of their principal fellow-citizens, and disdain to look upon them in any other light than of that perfect equality, which ought so carefully to be maintained, in every essential respect, among all the members of a free state.

From these premises it is apparent how much greater the contagion of any vice is likely to be in arbitrary governments, than in a country, where the spirit of freedom reigns in its full force, inspiring men with
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that independency of thinking and acting, which prompts every one to judge of and imitate actions, without respect of persons,

What claims our attention still more, it is no less clear, from what has been alledged, that, whenever gallantry happens to gain ground, it introduces a disposition to levity, and diminishes the spirit of manliness. When once a passage is opened to those vices that effeminate the manners of a people, they never fail to terminate in a destruction of that fortitude of mind and resoluteness of heart necessary for the support of political freedom.

How especially, therefore, doth it
behave

behove us, who are justly jealous of whatever may affect the liberties of our country, to feel and express our alarm and indignation, on any attempt to introduce among us a vice tending so directly to destroy those virtues and qualities, that alone can maintain the character of being a free people, of which we are so reasonably proud.

It cannot be denied, that an habitual indulgence in the amusements lately become so fashionable, is in its very nature conducive to taint the morals of mankind : the liberties of speech and behaviour which they occasion ; the looseness of mirth they give birth to ; the dissipation of mind they produce, and, above all, the

the wantonness of thought which they cannot fail to inspire ; all these have a manifest tendency to make a powerful impression on the passions ; and it must be confessed, that human frailty stands in great danger, in the midst of so many temptations.

But facts are stronger than all reasonings. The scandalous adventures that have happened of late years, among those classes that chiefly compose the admirers and votaries of these amusements, leave no doubt that they are real incentives to irregularity of morals ; and that the gallantries, to give them the modish appellation, which have made so much noise in the world, originated, in no small measure, from the dissipatedness

ness and loose habits contracted by assiduously frequenting them.

That such is the opinion of sober, reflecting people, may be plainly gathered, by the dissatisfaction and the murmurs excited among them, on the discovery of an addiction, or a propensity, to these amusements, in any of those females, in the preservation of whose character and good name they feel themselves interested, as parents, guardians, or relations.

In addition to those that have been adduced, one might bring a variety of arguments and instances to prove, that the ruin of matrimonial happiness, resulting from gallantry, which alone is a deplorable infamy in private life, is at the same time an enormous

enormous evil, in its consequences to the public.

Conjugal attachment is a virtue the more to be prized, as it is usually the foundation of the most persevering, invincible courage and manliness; qualities that have never forsaken a people that was noted for the other. An illustrious proof of this may be deduced from the behaviour of the Carthaginians; a nation no less renowned for the warm affection they bore to their wives and families, than for that intrepidity which was evidently produced by it, on some remarkable occasions. Their heroic fortitude in the latter scenes of their agonizing country, was incontestably due to that particular motive: the

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prodigious exertions of valour proceeding from it, have signally eternised the memory of their ruin, and rendered it less a matter of triumph to those who effected it, than glorious to themselves, in the eyes of impartial posterity.

Far different was the fall of those rivals, whose aggrandizement was owing to their destruction. After having, for a course of ages, enjoyed a freedom and reputation arising manifestly, in a great measure, from the prevalence among them of the conjugal virtues, they gradually degenerated to the most scandalous extremes in the opposite vice. This, by divesting them of that respect for the community, so strongly connected with,

with, and so powerfully enforced by, the just and reasonable influence of domestic regards, introduced a general corruption of manners, and accelerated the final dissolution of that constitutional liberty, which, as it was founded on the private excellence of character in individuals, could no longer subsist, when deprived of that necessary support.

Thus the virtues and the vices of the married state, are equally of immediate consequence to the public, whose happiness or misery is so closely and undeniably allied with that of its constituent members. Neither is it less clear, from the foregoing reasonings, that felicity in this best or worst situation of life, depends mate-

rially on the form of government we live under ; as from the greater or less degree of ascendancy we are liable to, will be derived a more extensive or restricted conformity to those flagitious models, to an imitation of which experience teaches, that human nature is so contagiously addicted.

Good sense alone is not a sufficient barrier to stop the incursion of pernicious examples. There is sense enough in France, in Italy, and elsewhere, to tell them how infamous the practices are, of which they are so notoriously, and, what is worse, so shamelessly guilty. But the grandees in those countries (who are commonly plunged in every kind of effeminacy and luxury) are beings of too
great

great magnitude, not to be set up as the standards of propriety, and copied with the most despicable servility. The customs of the court and its dependants, are considered as the completest patterns, the nearer to which men approach, the higher they raise themselves above the commonalty. This, in such parts, being held in the most absurd contempt, every one endeavours to estrange himself from it, by all possible methods. Now, sensuality and dissipation being the most easy and inviting, as well as the readiest way of resembling the great, all who have it in their power, indulge in the same liberties, and abandon themselves the more eagerly to a luxurious licentiousness, as it not

only approximates, but often endears them to their superiors.

The perversion of all classes is in this manner brought about, by a senseless conformity to what is denominated the way of the polite world. By relaxing the principles instilled through education, it urges men by degrees to a total desertion of all rules, but those of vogue and fashion ; and to deem nothing good or bad, but as it coincides with, or deviates from, the conduct of those, whom pusillanimity qualifies with the title of their betters.

When this unfashionableness of connubial affection has once taken possession of mankind, individuals, from losing the habit of domestic attachments, fall imperceptibly into an
indifference

indifference for every kind of endearing connexion: for, when once the ties of love are loosened, those of friendship are soon apt to give way; it being a truth exemplified by too many precedents, to suffer any doubt, that inconstancy in the first, is seldom accompanied by stability in the last.

Hence, a listlessness and unconcern so commonly prevail, for what is most deserving of predilection; and those objects that ought, from their nature, to afford the most rational delight, are discarded, to make room for pastimes that contribute much more to dissipate and confuse the mind, than to give it ease and recreation.

But in this inquiry into the many fatal consequences flowing from the

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spirit.

spirit of wantonness and dissipation, so prevalent among the upper classes abroad, what chiefly concerns an Englishman to reflect upon with the most serious attention, is, not only the moral, but the political corruption of mind resulting from them. They generate an effeminacy of soul, and a relaxation of manners, the woe-ful effects of which extend themselves to matters of the most respectable importance, as well as to those of a private nature.

Experience teaches, that the debauchery of the body, when it becomes habitual, is always followed by that of the mind.

This latter is a far greater evil than the former, as it tends so effectually to render it incurable.

The

The first is a slavish subserviency to our passions ; but the second is a settled determination to court pleasure in its most criminal shapes ; and to exercise and prostitute every faculty to that purpose.

This debauchery of the mind is a poison, that infallibly and radically destroys all sense of duty and magnanimity ; and qualifies a man for the ready perpetration of every kind of enormity, for the sake of attaining the objects he has in view.

For reasons already adduced, people of this description abound in the courts, and throughout the dominions of despotic monarchies.

In such countries, the highest ranks, from that variety of causes,
which

which arise from the frame of government, are peculiarly characterized by a total prostitution of their abilities. They consider them as no more than instruments to acquire or to preserve the means of gratifying that boundless addiction to their pleasures and enjoyments, which, like an insatiable gulph, swallows up all their wants and desires, and renders them callous to the feeling or admonition of the disgracefulness or criminality of their conduct.

When once men have given themselves up to a vicious course of living in their domestic privacy, they readily make a transition to profligacy in public matters. Experience has long shewn that the former is usually a preparation to the latter.

By

By acting from sensual motives, men teach themselves to act upon selfish principles. The career of iniquity, like that of fame, gathers vigour and strength from its progress, and, though often derived from small beginnings, increases at last to a magnitude, of which the very worst of men have no conception, on their first entrance into the paths of vice.

When they have inured themselves to the habit of sacrificing to the gratification of lesser passions, those considerations that ought to have restrained them, they acquire insensibly that hardness of heart, which steels a man against reflection, and induces him to pay no respect to those weightier

weightier and more essential maxims, that stand in the way of his desires. By accustoming themselves to guilt for the sake of pleasure, they soon learn to refrain from nothing that will serve their interest or their ambition. They arrive at last to that consummate pitch of depravity, which eclipses all prospects, and extinguishes all concern but for themselves, and fits them, in short, for an entire resignation of their powers to the use and command of those on whom their expectations depend; however flagitious the tasks may prove, to which they are not ignorant their talents will be applied.

From such ignominious causes proceeds the unlimited and interested

rested obedience and subservien-
 cy of the grantees in foreign
 countries. Hence their activity on
 public or private emergencies is so
 often exerted in the meanest endea-
 vours to please tyrannic superiors :
 adulation and compliance with their
 capricious injunctions, being the
 established means to preserve that
 footing of regard and notice from
 them, which in absolute governments
 is indispensably necessary, to confer
 on individuals an air of distinction
 and of importance.

We are not therefore to be sur-
 prised, if patriotism (that comprehen-
 sive benevolence which includes our
 welfare in that of the community)
 should so rarely be found in states
 immersed

immersed in a degeneracy of sentiments, that leads persons of the highest denomination, a very few excepted, to enslave themselves to the will of others, from the most contemptible, as well as the most iniquitous considerations.

As governments that are free afford, from the reasons above assigned, more frequent instances of matrimonial honour and happiness than others, they are also more fertile in patriots, from the same causes: the greatest have been produced in countries blest with liberty; and they have generally been conspicuous for the conjugal virtues, which are usually productive of many others.

Socrates, the patriot of mankind
rather

rather than of Greece, was a most excellent husband. The last Brutus, associate of Cassius, in asserting the Roman cause, was a pattern of nuptial tenderness.

Such were, in later times, that heroic champion of Swisserland, the celebrated William Tell; the great Barnevelt in Holland; and in France the last assertor of French liberty against the usurpations of the court, during the minority of Lewis the Fourteenth, the illustrious Broussel; whom Voltaire undervalues with equal injustice and impropriety.

Such was, in our country, that mirror of honesty and disinterestedness, as well as of the most splendid abilities, the truly noble Sir William Temple; who

who retained his integrity in the midst of a court, in its time the center of dissoluteness and profligacy ; that of our Charles the Second.

It may not be amiss to remark, that princes, who have harboured hostile designs on the liberties of their subjects, have sometimes endeavoured previously to undermine their morals by the introduction of voluptuousness.

We need go no farther than the last-mentioned monarch, sufficiently to illustrate this assertion. The system he pursued exhibits an alarming licentiousness of manners, encouraged by, and flowing from, the head to the members of the body politic :

politic : from the King, a man of no principle, to the Courtiers, many of whom soon learned to resemble him : from the Court, whence decency was threatened with banishment, to the People, among whom their former virtue began to decline. We may appeal, as it has already been observed, to the theatrical compositions of the time, for an evidence what sort of morals were then countenanced ; compositions which, however replete with wit and fancy, display such images of indecorum, as must disgrace the brightest scenes ; and such as the better taste of the nation will, it is hoped, never suffer a re-production of on the stage.

While temptations of various kinds were held out to the public, the So-

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vereign

veraign and his Ministers were studying how to avail themselves of the opportunities they created, to carry on their flagitious designs. Had his successor pursued the same track, he would have proved a more dangerous enemy ; but, happily for our ancestors and ourselves, he was so unwise as to attempt to overturn their religion : this being the last thing that human nature will submit to, it roused them at once from that lethargic indifference for, and oblivion of the commonweal, which are ever the sure effects of a vicious, immoral life.

From the foregoing observations it seems incontrovertible, that the spirit of liberty and that of gallantry, are things

things of so opposite a nature, as to prove utterly incompatible ; that it is morally impossible they should ever exist long together in the same country, as the one must necessarily destroy the other ; and that when libertinism in the married state gains ground in a free nation, that nation is approaching to the downfall of its freedom.

These are reflections that, whoever aspires at the title of patriot, ought to bear deeply engraven on his mind. They ought to be uppermost in the thoughts of the people of this country, at the present hour.

Neither is it less evident, that the only effectual means to preserve the spirit of liberty, is to cherish a manly

temper. This alone is its real solid foundation ; without it none of those eminent virtues and qualities can subsist, that enable men to establish and to support their freedom.

It follows from the same arguments, that, in order to secure this manliness of disposition, great vigilance is requisite over the various methods of relaxation that employ the leisure of a people. None should be permitted but such as are manifestly useful, thoroughly consistent with purity of morals, and absolutely harmless in their consequences, as well in regard to public interest, as to private welfare. Timely care should be taken to restrain dangerous novelties, and refinements in pleasure ;

sure ; and to banish with the strictest severity those amusements that lead to habits of effeminacy, the sure and infallible introducers of that dissipation and looseness of manners, which, in so short a time, becomes an inveterate disease ; and which, on that account, it is essentially incumbent on us to combat the approach of with indefatigable zeal.

A complete and avowed skill in the contrivance of frivolous pastimes, is a striking proof of the degeneracy of a people ; such a skill being held of no account in a great and flourishing state, too occupied in matters of importance, to bestow its attention on those of no moment.

This is a truth of which we may be easily and fully convinced, by recur-

ring to the different periods of liberty and slavery that have befallen so many nations. We shall invariably find, that so long as Liberty existed, the addition to pleasures was moderate ; but that as soon as slavery was established, a passion for effeminate entertainments became the reigning taste of high and low.

The Athenians, at that period when they won the battles of Marathon and Salamis, and were confessedly the most conspicuous of all the Grecian Republics, had made but small improvements in the dangerous art of refining pleasures ; though sufficiently conversant otherways in elegant and manly recreations : but after they had turned their chief application to them,
and

and had made Athens the scene of a perpetual round of amusements, they no longer remained the formidable people they once had been. In a short space of time, with the loss of their manliness of temper, they not only forfeited the supremacy over their neighbours, but, together with their former grandeur and reputation, they lost their very liberty and independence as a people, and were reduced to as abject a condition of servitude as any we read of in history.

The fate of the Romans was precisely similar. Till the introduction of those Asiatic modes of luxurious gaiety and pleasure, which their historians so bitterly complain of, and unanimously represent as the prime

cause of their corruption and ruin, we find they were content with relaxations of a simple kind, easily procured, of no excessive cost, and yet, many of them not devoid of elegance: but when these foreign pastimes were adopted, they soon put an end to the noble simplicity of manners for which they had been so long renowned, and were followed by a perversion of morals that speedily infected the whole commonwealth, and threw their liberties into the hands of those who could purchase them, or had daringness enough to invade them.

The same may be observed respecting several modern states. Were it not an invidious, it would not be a difficult task, to point out from

from what causes some parts of Europe have been reduced to their present condition.

Such also must inevitably be our own fate, if we delay the remedy of those evils, that threaten us more than the generality of men seem by their conduct inclined to believe.

The propensity to licentiousness certainly prevails in a degree, that will prove as destructive to our constitution, as to that of every other free state where it has been tolerated. Nothing is more trite than the maxim, that like causes will produce like effects; but nothing less trite than the alarm this indisputable maxim ought to excite. One would think that men admitted the truth and the
force

force of every wise saying, which tradition has handed down from the remotest times, in all cases but such as are applicable to themselves. There were in Athens and Rome patriots enough to declaim against the excesses, which they foresaw would terminate in the perdition of their respective countries: doubtless these patriots were heard and admired; but their exhortations produced no more than a fruitless approbation of what they said: their countrymen were become too much wedded to vicious habits, to be prevailed on to relinquish them; and while they acknowledged they had been the ruin of others, they seemed tacitly to flatter themselves, they should meet

meet with an exemption from the common fate.

The present times in England are exactly of a similar complexion: we have before us the examples of all nations, of all ages; we have sufficient warning pouring upon us from all quarters; we frankly acknowledge the danger we are in; yet, while we speak of it as a matter deserving the serious attention of all, how few are there who will refrain from sharing, as far as they are able, in this pernicious system of perpetual dissipation, and contributing to increase the common danger! The truth is, that what Seneca said of the Romans in his days, may be equally applied to the English at present :

sent : *Mala sua, quod malorum ultimum est, amant* ; they are fallen into the greatest of misfortunes ; that of being enamoured with their own vices.

One of the main causes of the introduction of this restless passion for luxurious entertainments, is the too frequent visits we pay to those parts where they chiefly flourish. A large proportion of our countrymen abroad, consists of such as are wholly unfit for the purposes of travelling : though they might be of some service by spending their fortunes at home, they can do nothing abroad but give foreigners a mean opinion of the English nation. Yet such are the regulators of our fashions and pastimes.

pastimes. Having, in the course of their rambles, employed their attention chiefly on such objects, they set up at their return, for dictators in what persons of sense and capacity think it unworthy of them to take the lead.

But what is more prejudicial to the public, many of these superficial people, unable to view with judgment and penetration the occurrences they meet with abroad, are apt to be charmed with that exterior pomp of things which prevails in so many countries. Without considering whether there is any reality under the vast appearances their eyes are feasted with, they readily imagine the contempt, with which the
generality

generality of our countrymen have hitherto treated these affectations of magnificence, proceeds from ignorance and ill taste ; and that with all our pretensions, we are neither a wiser nor a happier people than those we so freely take upon us to undervalue.

But let us not be deceived with the glare that gilds the chains of slavery in other parts of the world : let not the shows, the pageantries displayed with so much care and solicitude on stated occasions, impose upon us : they are only calculated for the credulous and the uninformed : to the clear-sighted they are no more than the veil that is thrown by tyranny over wretchedness,
and

and serve at best but to hide the miserable situation of the inhabitants from their own perception.

Let us not, by the same rule, be brought to believe the many festivals of gaiety that reign among the great in those countries, are any substantial, unerring proof that they enjoy life in a higher degree of taste and relish than we do : those ostentations of splendour only shew how little else they dare have to do, how much their time is not their own, by their being obliged so ignominiously to mispend it, in quest of methods to render the burthen of it less cumbersome.

It must not, however, be dissembled, -that there are advocates among
us

us for this perpetual rotation of costly amusements, from a notion they are of service to some of the industrious branches of the community, by promoting trade, and circulating money among the working classes. But when we reflect, that the appearance necessary to figure at these amusements, with the contingent expences they occasion, and, above all, the spirit of extravagance they infuse, have plunged numbers of people into difficulties; when, what is still worse, we consider, that finally the load of these difficulties often falls principally on such as can least afford to bear it, the laborious part of the community, whose complaints of want of payment

ment are so frequent and notorious, it will be found that this notion, which carries at first sight some show of plausibility, is, on examination, ill grounded ; and that the interest of trade is not in the end more consulted than the interest of our morals.

But were it even true, that some classes of trades-people are benefited by them, is the profit arising to a few individuals, to be weighed against the odious consequences that must ensue to the community at large, from such morals and manners as this pernicious perpetuity of intoxicating pleasures will necessarily encourage ? Is there no felicity in life, but what arises from an increase of opulence ? Or is it a sufficient balance for the

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various

various evils it may occasion ? This may be the creed of those who, for the paltry gratification of their avarice, set up with such a bare-faced arrogance, for the patrons and promoters of improper and dangerous excesses. But when individuals, whose private interest may perhaps be answered by such means, shew themselves careless of what may befall the public, provided their views are fulfilled, the public, in its turn, surely, has a right to divest itself of any concern for such undeserving members, and to treat them as outcasts, unworthy of that society they are so ready to sacrifice to their own emolument.

The preceding pages have, it is presumed,

presumed, represented, without exaggeration, the consequences of that licentious, wanton spirit of voluptuousness and dissipation, which has of late, from presiding over our pleasures, assumed an influence over our manners.

After having depicted in its real colours, what is so truly alarming to the whole nation, as well in its collective as in its individual capacity, it remains to be sincerely lamented, that any man should be so utterly abandoned in his morals, so strangely limited in his conceptions, or curst with such a levity of heart, as to treat the greatest enormity produced by this unhappy spirit, rather as a matter of gaiety and jocoseness, than

as an object demanding the most serious reflections.

In this they may possibly think themselves supported by the shameful and guilty connivance, one might almost say toleration, it too openly meets with in some countries abroad.

But the smallest degree of consideration must quickly convince them, that depravity and infatuation alone can give countenance to what, in the scale of sound reasoning, is evidently a scandal to human nature.

We are taught by daily experience, that, however the dissolute and profligate may endeavour to soften it, by the fashionable appellation of gallantry, infidelity in the married state is pregnant with such infinite mischief

to society, that it cannot meet with too much abhorrence and reprobation.

No species of wickedness strikes more directly at the root of human happiness. Exclusive of its necessary and immediate effect, the destruction of domestic tranquillity, and the introduction of anarchy and confusion into families, it is the usual source of the most irreconcilable and most fatal enmities, and naturally produces the most dreadful catastrophes in private life. Whenever the spirit of gallantry gets footing, and grows habitual in any country, it breeds diffidence and suspicion between individuals, and is unquestionably the greatest obstruction to friendship,

from the fear and jealousy we are liable to entertain of those who have constant opportunities to abuse the privileges annexed to it. It banishes all delicacy of sentiment, and utterly extinguishes that respect for the fair-sex, which is founded on the opinion of their honour and virtue ; of which, when the violation ceases to be disputable among the men, it seldom remains an object of consequence among the women. In short, by extirpating the most effectual motive for reciprocal attachment, it annihilates the essential felicity of love ; and by extending our desires and passions, and the hope of gratifying them indiscriminately to all, it eradicates the noblest refinements that dignify the human

human system, and throws all the established ideas of civilized nature, into their primitive chaos and confusion.

When we steadfastly look on this picture of the many evils, inevitably arising in domestic life, from the introduction of so heinous a vice, when we add to them the public calamities that have been proved necessarily to ensue from the same cause, it certainly behoves every reasonable man to exert his best endeavours, to prevent their admission, or to expel them, by an eradication of that which gives them existence.

Countries have always flourished, in proportion to the virtue of their inhabitants. The prosperity of the

British Empire has long been due to the many great qualities, universally acknowledged to be possessed by the natives of this country. Our superiority to the rest of Europe, arose not more from a stronger exertion of our faculties, in the various enterprizes we formed; than from a less addiction to those frivolities, that have effeminated the minds, and contaminated the manners of other nations.

As soon as we forget to guard against their entrance, the opulence of this island will invite an inundation of them. The sage Montesquieu has predicted, from a variety of reasonings, that, if ever the English should lose their liberty, they would become the greatest slaves upon earth. By a
parity

parity of reasoning, it is no less presumable, that, whenever we lose those qualifications that have raised our character so high in the world, and fall into a general adoption of the follies and vices of foreign nations, we shall become the most vicious and degenerate of men.

For the sake of the many valuable considerations we have at stake, let us then be watchful to oppose the progress of that immoderate fondness for expensive, luxurious pleasures, which bears such evident marks of enmity to our welfare.

Let it not appear, by a tame acquiescence in the too prevailing fashion of the day, that we are so sunk in revelry and dissipation, so fascinated by
the

the arts of effeminacy, as to be totally lost to the sense of our danger.

Let not our foes have it to boast, that what they could not accomplish by the power of their arms, they have at last effected by the force of their example, a subserviency to their notions and manners, and an imitation of those false refinements, which it ought to be our pride, as much as it is our interest, that our enemies should always excel us in.

Let our fair countrywomen still retain the reputation they have long and justly deserved, that of being supremely beautiful, and equally modest. It is the most inestimable prize they can covet: let them not lose the loveliness and dignity of their sex,

sex, in those freedoms that are inseparable from so repeated a frequentation of the pastimes of late so much in vogue. These are no proper soil for the cultivation of true modesty, which, like the sensitive plant, shrinks at the least touch of familiarity.

Let us leave to the Italians, let us leave to the French, the talents of seduction : let us still glory in artlessness and simplicity in our transactions with womankind, while they plume themselves on their dexterity in assailing and corrupting innocence, and in all the various intricacies of iniquitous intercourse : let the women of Italy rejoice in that scandalous liberty, they so steadfastly

fastly maintain, of giving their hand
 to one man, and their heart to ano-
 ther : let the women of France
 exult in that privilege, they so amply
 exert, of changing perpetually the
 objects of their criminal attachments,
 and glory, as it were, in the open
 display of their libertinism : let the
 men in those countries, slavishly
 abandoned to this debasing system of
 sensuality, lose themselves in a round
 of wantonness and debauchery ; and
 become callous to those feelings of
 the heart and mind, that relate to
 any subject wherein pleasure has
 not the principal preponderance :
 let their attention be taken up with
 a fondness for, and an admiration
 of those imaginary refinements,
 which,

which, while they prove a source of fruitless, inglorious entertainment, never fail to debilitate the nobler faculties, and to create a forgetfulness of the more important functions, that ought to employ an individual who wishes and pretends to be ranked above the vulgar.

But may never this contagion reach our country ! Let us recollect the figure we lately made in the eye of the universe : let us ponder on the means by which this figure was, and is to be supported : let us frequently revolve in our thoughts, that a people who mean to distinguish themselves from all others by the excellence of their constitution, by their prosperity at home, and their
glory

glory abroad, must also resolve to distinguish themselves no less by the virtues and qualifications through which those trophies are obtained.

In this respect a nation may be compared to Hercules, fitting in judgment on the charms of virtue, and the allurements of vice : its choice must be determined in favour of one ; it cannot become the votary of both.

The temple of Fame stands on a steep summit ; labour and perseverance alone will enable us to ascend. He that proposes to succeed in the attempt, should, conformably to the words of the poet, warm his imagination with the prospect of the laurels

laurels that he will gather on the top of the mountain : he will then disdain small difficulties, and derive strength from the greatness of his enterprize.

Magnum iter ascendo, sed dat

Mibi gloria vires :

Non juvat ex facili lecta

Corona jugo.

But without recurring to allegories and metaphors, the various motives that have been enumerated, are powerful enough to induce reflecting people, to condemn without hesitation, that ruinous system of endless amusements and pleasures, which we seem to glory in having collected from the whole circle of fashionable follies in present existence
throughout

throughout Europe. A sufficiency of proofs has appeared that they are clearly destructive of our domestic virtues, and repugnant to that manly, strenuous disposition requisite in a government like ours, where a certain untractableness of temper is often necessary for its preservation.

Rouzed, therefore, by the reflection of what we owe to ourselves, and by the importance of those warnings we behold in the fate of others, none, who are convinced of the rectitude of the foregoing allegations, should be remiss in their efforts to give an effectual check to the equally rapid and audacious progress of the mischief complained of. A sensible
and

and sagacious people, provident of futurity, and able to investigate what may happen by what is past, is unpardonable, when it remains passive and supine under such a conviction, and neglects to apply the necessary remedies, before the malady has attained to an incurable height.

It is not reasonable to imagine, the flagitious proceedings that now engross the attention and conversation of the times, will be long confined to a few, while the temptations that occasioned these few to fall, are still held out to the many : such hopes were absurd ; they are not in the nature of things. These proceedings will not even be restricted to those classes

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among

among which they first began : examples are too powerful incentives to be slighted among the little, when once they have been diffusively adopted among the great ; and the bad have invariably been found irresistibly contagious, when suffered to operate without an immediate and vigorous opposition.

Animated by these cogent motives ; by the desire of preserving peace, reputation, and happiness within our families ; by the attachment we profess for our country, and its excellent constitution ; by all the ties, in short, of interest, policy, and religion ; let us resolutely determine to strike home at the cause of those evils,

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evils, that so forcibly, so manifestly threaten destruction to what we hold most dear in public, as well as in private life.

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